

Statement by the Department of State, Regarding the Soviet Note on Berlin, November 27, 1958¹

The Soviet Government has today handed the United States Ambassador in Moscow a communication relating to Berlin. Apparently similar notes have been received by the Ambassadors of France, the United Kingdom, and the Federal Republic of Germany. The communication is a very long one and will of course receive careful study.

The Soviets seem to be proposing that, while they keep their grip on East Berlin, the three Western allies abandon their rights in West Berlin and retire in favor of what is called a "free city." Their "free city" proposal is limited to West Berlin. The Soviet Government indicates that, unless the three Western allies accept this Soviet proposal within 6 months, the Soviet Union will consider itself free of its obligations to them in relation to Berlin.

It is clear that a number of fundamental considerations are raised which will have to be kept in mind while we study the Soviet note.

One of these is that the United States, along with Britain and France, is solemnly committed to the security of the Western sectors of Berlin. Two and a quarter million West Berliners in reliance thereon have convincingly and courageously demonstrated the good fruits of freedom.

Another consideration is that the United States will not acquiesce in a unilateral repudiation by the Soviet Union of its obligations and responsibilities formally agreed upon with Britain, France, and the United States in relation to Berlin. Neither will it enter into any agreement with the Soviet Union which, whatever the form, would have the end result of abandoning the people of West Berlin to hostile domination.

The Western allies have for years sought to negotiate with the Soviets for the freedom of all of Germany, of which Berlin is part, on the basis of free elections by the German people themselves. Indeed, the three Western powers are still awaiting a reply to their latest proposals presented on September 30, 1958, to the Soviet Government.

The United States Government will consult with the British and French Governments as well as with the Federal Republic of Germany and NATO in regard to the new Soviet note.

Statement by Secretary of State Dulles, Regarding the Soviet Note on Berlin, November 30, 1958²

[Extract]

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During the course of my stop-over at Augusta, I reported to the President on the developing situation following the receipt on November 27 of the Soviet Union notes on Berlin. We noted the exchanges of views which had already taken place between the Western

¹ *The Soviet Note on Berlin: An Analysis* (Department of State publication 6757), p. 49.

² White House news release, November 30, 1958. The statement was released at Augusta, Georgia.

Allies most concerned, including the Federal Republic of Germany, and the general harmony of views already manifest in the West. Consultations will, of course, continue.

The President reiterated our government's firm purpose that the United States will not enter into any arrangement or embark on any course of conduct which would have the effect of abandoning the responsibilities which the United States, with Great Britain and France, has formally assumed for the freedom and security of the people of West Berlin.

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*Four-Power Communiqué on Berlin, December 14, 1958*¹

The Foreign Ministers of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States met on December 14, 1958 in Paris to discuss developments in the Berlin situation during the past month, including notes addressed to their several governments on November 27 by the Soviet Union. The four Foreign Ministers had the benefit of an oral statement on the situation in Berlin by Herr Brandt, Governing Mayor of that city.

The Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom and the United States once more reaffirmed the determination of their governments to maintain their position and their rights with respect to Berlin including the right of free access.

They found unacceptable a unilateral repudiation by the Soviet Government of its obligations to the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States in relation to their presence in Berlin and the freedom of access to that city or the substitution of the German authorities of the Soviet Zone for the Soviet Government insofar as those rights are concerned.

After further discussion of the Soviet notes of November 27, 1958 the four Foreign Ministers found themselves in agreement on the basic issues to be dealt with in the replies to those notes. They will consult with their allies in the NATO Council, following which the four governments will formulate their replies.

*NATO Declaration on Berlin, December 16, 1958*²

1. The North Atlantic Council examined the question of Berlin.
2. The Council declares that no state has the right to withdraw unilaterally from its international engagements. It considers that the denunciation by the Soviet Union of the interallied agreements on Berlin can in no way deprive the other parties of their rights or relieve the Soviet Union of its obligations. Such methods destroy the mutual confidence between nations which is one of the foundations of peace.
3. The Council fully associates itself with the views expressed on the subject by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in their statement of 14th December.

¹ *The Soviet Note on Berlin: An Analysis* (Department of State publication 6757), p. 50.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.